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COVER: Male Eastern Bluebird
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MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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JUNE 1955

Number 2

MARYLAND NEST SUMMARY FOR 1954

Edwin Willis

This year, Bob Stewart added the Willet, Marvin Hewitt, the Whip-poor-will, Lois McCollough the Golden-winged Warbler, Charles Buchanan the Alder Flycatcher, and the Fletchers the Summer Tanager to bring the grand total of nesting birds reported from Maryland since 1949 to 154 species. Along the coast, the Wilson's Plover and the Chuck-will's-widow have eluded us these past six years; inland, the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Nighthawk, Pine Warbler and Henslow's Sparrow just disappear with the nesting season; and up in the mountains it has been years since anyone reported a Veery or a Hermit Thrush nest. Only 98 species were reported nesting this year -- we even missed the Sparrow Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Goldfinch. But the Pied-billed Grebe, Black-billed Cuckoo, Blue Grosbeak and other unusual records made up for those we missed.

One interesting aspect of nest-study brought out by this season's reports was that of nest success. Oliver Gaines happened to see a Blue Jay take an egg from an Eastern Kingbird nest at Edgewood. An early July storm destroyed several Denton nests visited by the Fletchers. But usually nest destruction occurs at times when we are not watching the nest. Nest desertion or destruction resulting from our interference we can avoid with a little caution, by avoiding noise, commotion, or leaving a plain trail of trampled weeds to the nest; observing the nest from several feet away, or with binoculars, is often necessary. But even without human interference nest success of most birds is probably as low as 50 percent. Our problem is that, when we return to find a nest empty, we may be uncertain whether the young have left or been destroyed. If squeaking brings up no anxious parents, and young are not calling nearby, looking at the nest will sometimes give us some idea of whether or not the nest was successful. A fresh-looking nest lining and side walls, especially if the straw of the lining is torn up or there are egg shells present, is usually a good sign of an unsuccessful nest. Young in their development pack down the nest-lining into a mat at the bottom and wear down the side walls. If young have reached the stage of feathers in the nest, feather scales which have been dropped as feathers burst their sheaths will be mixed with nest-material in the bottom. It was usually possible for me to visit a Red-wing nesting marsh soon after the nesting season and tell fairly accurately by the condition of the nests which nests had been successful. Robins and many other species illustrate this just as well.

A further problem which concerns nest-watchers is that of definitions of such terms as "incubation period" and "fledgling." The former, ornithologists now agree, is best determined (outside of marking each egg as laid and watching carefully to see when

incubation begins and when each egg hatches) by recording the number of days from the last egg of a set to the last egg to hatch. Of course, we then determine the incubation period of only one egg, but the incubation period of all eggs is usually close to this. This method has the advantage that: (1) we do not have to determine the point in laying the set at which incubation begins; and (2) we can be warned by the hatching of the first young that the last young will hatch soon. A further help to making less frequent visits is that birds usually lay eggs of a clutch on consecutive days, most often in the early morning. So, if there are two eggs in a Robin nest on May 2, and we do not visit again until the fourth young is emerging on May 17, we can say fairly certainly that the incubation period was 13 days.

Ornithologists do not agree on the use of such terms as "fledgling" and "juvenile." However, recent usage limits the term, "fledgling", to young birds which are just learning to fly, rather than to young birds with feathers still in the nest, and I believe the word should be restricted to the former. Of course, it is not incorrect to use the word in referring to any young which have feathers, but it is best to call young in the nest "nestlings." The term, "juvenile", may be used for young birds which fly well, but are still growing and are fed entirely by their parents. The term, "immature", has long been used to refer to young birds which are grown, but which show by plumage, voice, or by partial dependence on their parents that they are not adult.

Each of the following persons reported ten or more nests in 1954: Elsie Bilbrough, Lois Braun, Philip DuMont, Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Fletcher, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hewitt, Jean Worthley, Chandler Robbins, Robert Stewart, and Edwin Willis. The junior member who contributed the most nest records was Bobby Fletcher.

PIED-BILLED GREBE - Three eggs were in a floating nest in Scurpus cyperinus on Lake Redington at Patuxent Refuge, June 4 (R.E. Stewart, F.M. Uhler).

GREEN HERON - Five eggs were in a Dorchester County nest on June 8, and 4 large young were in another nest, August 3 (Stewart).

LEAST BITTERN - Four nests, within $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the ground in cat-tail or needlerush marshes. Four eggs on Elliott Island on May 13 (Stewart) and 3 eggs, 3 eggs, and 4 young just leaving at Strawberry Point, June 8 (Willis).

MALLARD - Four young, a week or two old, were at the Middle River bridge, June 9 (Willis).

BLACK DUCK - Bob Stewart found nine nests, with 7 to 10 eggs each, and saw broods of young, at Kent Narrows, Elliott Island, Newport Bay Marsh (Worcester Co.), and Dame's Quarter Marsh (Somerset Co.). Marvin Hewitt found a nest with 11 eggs at Greensboro on April 2. Other nests contained eggs in early May, and broods were out May 12 to August 12 (when fairly large).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL - On Elliott Island, the 11th egg of a set was laid on May 20. On August 4 five large young were with a female near Blackwater Refuge (Stewart).

WOOD DUCK - Two Denton nests were destroyed by raccoons

(Fletchers). On June 4 at Patuxent Refuge four boxes contained 1 to 10 eggs, and 6 or so small young of three broods were out (Stewart, Uhler).

TURKEY VULTURE - A downy young one present in a hollow red maple log in woods near Denton, May 13 to 31, was identified by its band on July 14, when it was well grown (A.J. Fletcher).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - Adults were at two White Marsh nests 35 and 20 feet up in oak trees, March 29 and April 9 (Douglas Hackman).

MARSH HAWK - Two Elliott Island nests, one with three eggs in needlerushes on April 28, and another with 4 eggs in Spartina alterniflora on May 20 (Stewart).

OSPREY - Three nests, being built, April 1 to May 8, at Gibson Island (Mrs. Gail Tappan and Mrs. W. L. Henderson) and Denton (Fletchers). The adult was still present at the second nest of one of the Denton pairs on July 7.

RUFFED GROUSE - Six eggs in a nest at the Pleasant Valley Nature Camp near Bittering, Garrett Co., on June 12 (Harley Winer).

BOB-WHITE - Three Denton nests, all destroyed (Fletchers, M. Butenschoen). On July 13 one nest had 14 eggs.

VIRGINIA RAIL - Stewart found four nests in Spartina patens marsh near Elliott Island, with 6 and 9 eggs on May 20 and 5 and 9 eggs on June 2.

KILLDEER - Seven nests. Incubation period of two sets at Owings Mills was about 28 days. One set was still being incubated on June 20 (Jean Worthley).

WILLET - Stewart found three nests in Spartina marshes at Elliott Island, with 2 and 4 eggs on May 20 and 2 eggs on June 2.

LAUGHING GULL - Nests with eggs and young on a Sinepuxent Bay island below South Point, June 26 (P.A. DuMont et al.).

FORSTER'S TERN - Young out of their nests in the Robins Marsh colony, June 26 (DuMont and D.C. Aud. Soc.).

COMMON TERN - At least 150 pairs had eggs or small young at a Manokin River island, Somerset Co., June 11 (Stewart). Partial count of 47 nests on island below South Point, June 26: 23 with 1 egg, 22 with 2 eggs, 2 with 3 eggs (DuMont and D.C. Aud. Soc.).

LEAST TERN - Two nests at Kent Narrows, June 27 (Mr. and Mrs. Mulloy).

BLACK SKIMMER - Sixty-six nests on an island below South Point on June 26: 4 nests with 1 egg, 6 with 2 eggs, 17 with 3 eggs, 37 with 4 eggs, 1 each with 5 and 6 eggs; single newly-hatched young in 4 nests are included in above counts (P.A. DuMont and D.C. Aud.Soc.).

MOURNING DOVE - Thirteen nests, from 5 to 20 feet up. Nests were occupied at least April 10 to August 2.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - A Bittering nest contained 2 eggs in

mid-June (Ronald Warnick).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - Alice Friedel found an adult on a nest in Cunningham Swamp, Garrett Co., on June 12.

BARN OWL - A. J. Fletcher and Marvin Hewitt found a nest with 4 young at Greensboro on June 9.

HORNED OWL - Russell Ely (fide A. J. Fletcher) reported a nest in the hollow top of a Goldsboro sweetgum stub.

BARRED OWL - A young bird, banded May 3, was in a dead oak stub at White Marsh, April 1 (Hackman).

WHIP-POOR-WILL - Nest at Henderson with one egg, May 3-10, is first Caroline County record; egg gone May 11, probably hatched.

CHIMNEY SWIFT - Four young left a White Marsh nest July 17, (Hackman), and 3 left an Owings Mills nest two days later (Jean Worthley).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - Building on May 18 and incubating on May 31 at Greensboro (Hewitt).

BELTED KINGFISHER - Foot-grooves and fish scales at a Middle River nest hole showed it was in use June 8 (Willis).

FLICKER - Four nests. Adults were feeding young 50 feet up in a dead chestnut at Pleasant Valley Camp, Bittinger, June 18 (Lois McCollough). Young were nearly ready to leave at Owings Mills on July 7 (Jean Worthley).

PILEATED WOODPECKER - Female fed 2 young out of the nest on July 10 in the backyard of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Matteossian in Bethesda.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - Feeding young on June 17 and later in a Pikesville dead tree (Rodney Jones).

HAIRY WOODPECKER - Adult brought one young to a Havre de Grace suet feeder, May 29 (Lois Braun).

DOWNY WOODPECKER - Three nests; young were ready to leave at Laurel on May 31 (C. S. Robbins), were in a Goldsboro nest on June 1 (Hewitt), and out of the nest at Denton, June 7 (Fletchers).

EASTERN KINGBIRD - The eleven nests were above 18 feet in suburban trees, except for an 8 foot nest at Federalsburg (Hewitt), a 10 foot nest near Greensboro (Elsie Bilbrough), and two Elliott Island nests only 3 feet above the bank of a creek, and only 200 yards apart (Stewart). Eggs were in nest in early June, and young in late June and early July.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER - From four nests, two in a newspaper box only 4 feet up and another 5 feet up under a gas tank cover, a set of 4 eggs and two of 5 were reported. Some 8 young left two nests, as early as July 9 at Denton (Fletchers).

EASTERN PHOEBE - Twenty-three nests, from 2½ to 30 feet up (median, 7 feet) on buildings and bridges. Oliver I. Gaines found two broods in an edgewood nest, with 4 young May 8 to 26 (18 days) and 5 eggs laid by June 7, with young which left on July 2. There were seven other first-brood nests. All complete sets were of 5 eggs except for one of 6 and one of 4.

ALDER FLYCATCHER - 3 young in Loch Raven nest, July 31 (C. M. Buchanan).

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER - Adult on nest at Greensboro, May 31 (Hewitt). Two eggs at Havre de Grace, July 10 (Lois Braun).

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE - Five nests. Two young left a Henderson nest on July 12 (Hewitt).

PRAIRIE HORNED LARK - Two nests on the lawn of the Glenn L. Martin airplane factory at Middle River held young on March 19 and 23 (Willis). On August 2 at Sparrows Point, 2 fledglings of a later brood were being fed (Hackman).

TREE SWALLOW - Four nests, one in a Bittering Wood Duck box and three in boxes and a tree stump at Denton. On June 20, 4 eggs were in the Denton nest (Fletchers).

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - Six nests, holes in banks. At Denton, a pair visited at least from April 19 through June 3.

BARN SWALLOW - Eighty nests reported, 37 (and 4 second broods in the same nests) by C. S. Robbins (all except 4 in the Mance Barn at Patuxent Refuge) and 29 (with 8 second broods) by Jean Worthley from Owings Mills. These records, and a note from A. J. Fletcher to the effect that perhaps half of the barns in the Denton area have 5 or more nests, show that the trend to modern, closed barns has not affected the swallows adversely in certain areas yet. At Owings Mills, 5 young left a nest on May 25, when most nests contained complete sets of eggs. Most young of the first brood left nest the last of June, while young of one second brood left as early as June 19. Young only half grown were in two nests there on July 30, and 5 young recently hatched were in another nest. Elsewhere nesting followed this pattern, with building April 19 to June 2 and probably later, and eggs May 6 to July 19. The interval between young leaving a nest and the first egg of the next brood seemed to be about two weeks, though two of the latest pairs above took only about one week. Young were in nests for at least 19 days in three cases; incubation was over 15 days (one nest) and under 17 days (two nests). The set of eggs was from 2 (one nest) to 6 (7 nests); for 34 first brood nests, the mean was 4.85, and for 18 second-brood nests the mean was 4.0. Thirty-four nests produced one or more young, while eleven did not. One nest at Owings Mills had two sets, both unsuccessful.

PURPLE MARTIN - At Denton, building May 1 and 14, young hatching June 20, 106 young banded June 30 and July 2, and all out of the nest by July 23 (Fletchers).

BLUE JAY - Building at White Marsh on May 21 (Hackman). Two young left Middle River nest on June 9 (Willis).

CROW - Four nests. Four young at White Marsh May 20 (Hackman).

CAROLINA CHICKADEE - Four nests. An adult first brought young to the Robbinses' feeder at Laurel May 27; but as late as June 18 young were still in a nest at Henderson (Hewitt).

TUFTED TITMOUSE - Juveniles out of the nest at Middle River, June 10 (Willis). Three young left Havre de Grace nest at 7:30 p.m., May 31 (Lois Braun).

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH - Feeding young 15 feet up in a dead tree

at Elliott Island on May 30 (R. B. Fletcher).

HOUSE WREN - Twenty nests, from 3 to 12 feet up in birdhouses (nine), tree holes (four), even in a cow skull (Jean Worthley, Owings Mills). Nearly all nests contained young during the first three weeks of June. Four nests were of a later brood, with eggs in early July. Five eggs laid at Owings Mills, July 12 to 16, hatched on July 27; young left Aug. 11. Incubation was thus 11 days, while young stayed 15 days. Eight sets were of 4 to 7 eggs (mean, 5.5).

BEWICK'S WREN - At Millers in northeastern Carroll County Jean Worthley and Mrs. Richard Dubois found six eggs in a rusty can buried in the leaves of open woods. On July 5 six young were ready to leave.

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - Six nests found. Eggs (usually 5) in early June, young 1/3 grown on Aug. 12 (Stewart at Elliott Island). The nests there were in Spartina rather than the usual cat-tails.

MOCKINGBIRD - Seven nests, all except one in conifers, from 3 to 10 feet up. Building at White Marsh, April 16 (Hackman); young out of the nests at Denton, May 19 and July 3 (Fletchers); 2 eggs at Patuxent Refuge Aug. 21 (Stewart).

CATBIRD - Thirty-four nests, from 2 to 15 feet up in bushes, often in greenbriers. Only six nests were second-brood nests, counting eggs which hatched May 25 at Abingdon (O. I. Gaines) as the earliest first-brood, and all birds incubating in early June as on their first brood. Eggs still in an Owings Mills nest on July 20 marked the latest nest. There was one set of 2 eggs, nine sets of 3 eggs, eleven of 4, and one of 5 (mean, 3.6).

BROWN THRASHER - Eighteen nests, with 3 or 4 eggs each (mean, 3.4). They were from the ground to 8 feet up in dense bushes or blackberry briars. At Denton, eggs were laid in a nest, April 22 to 25 (Fletchers); young were out there on May 31 (M. Butenschoen), and at Owings Mills, July 6 (Jean Worthley).

ROBIN - Seventy nests reported, from 3 to 70 feet up (median, 12 feet) in trees and bushes near houses (four actually on buildings). There were twice as many first-brood nests as second-brood nests. All nestings were during the usual period --building in late April and again late May to July 11; eggs, April 22 to late May and commonly in mid-June; young out of the nest, May 19 to mid-June and in early July.

WOOD THRUSH - Twenty-one nests, from 4 to 25 feet up (median, 7 feet) in deciduous bushes and saplings in woods. At Middle River young were out of the nest on June 9, and there and elsewhere young out of the nest were common in June and the first half of July.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD - Eleven nests, all under 7 feet up in boxes or woodpecker holes. Building as early as March 26 near Greensboro (Bilbrough). At Denton, eggs of the first brood were in from April 29 to late May, and young left May 28 and soon after Aug. 11 (Fletchers). A large number of eggs there were destroyed, perhaps because nest-boxes were only 4 feet up.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER - Building nests at Woodstock on April 23 and in early May (Mrs. Carl B. Lubbert), at Havre de Grace on April 20 and May 8-9 (Lois Braun), and in Caroline County on May 3, 8, 18, and 27 (Marvin and Naomi Hewitt).

CEDAR WAXWING - Building a later-deserted nest at Edgewood,

June 8 (Oliver I. Gaines).

STARLING - Two nests reported. Three large young removed from a Denton nest, April 14, and still fed nearby by parents on April 20 were unusually early (M. Butenschoen), as young of the first brood generally leave in late May.

RED-EYED VIREO - Eight nests. Two eggs 7 feet in holly bush at Middle River, June 7 (Willis). Two young were in a Denton nest August 8 to 18, or about 10 days (R. B. Fletcher). Lois Braun found 4 Harford County nests, 12 to 30 feet up.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER - Four young left a ground nest at Laurel on May 29 (C. S. Robbins).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - Young were in Caroline County nests as early as May 31 and as late as July 12 (Hewitt).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - Four young in nests 6 inches off the ground in field near Bittering, June 16 (Lois McCollough); two days later the empty nest and excited parents indicated that the young had left successfully.

YELLOW WARBLER - Building at Loch Raven, May 1 (E. K. Lubbert). Three half-grown young in Strawberry Point nest June 8 (Willis).

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - Nesting in tall loblolly pine at Gibson Island, July 10 (Mrs. Tappan, Mrs. Henderson).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - Two eggs in Bittering nest on June 13 (Anderson and Munnikhuyzen).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - Building at Havre de Grace, May 16 (Braun). Feeding young in two Gibson Island nests on July 10 (Mrs. Gail Tappan and Mrs. W. L. Henderson).

OVEN-BIRD - Adult feeding 2 young out of the nest at Havre de Grace, July 9 (Lois Braun).

LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH - Building April 11, 2 eggs April 18, 5 eggs April 22 and 28, young in nest May 6 at Greensboro (Hewitt).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - Five eggs in nest on floor of sweetgum-maple climax forest at Denton, May 20, had hatched by June 7 (A.J. Fletcher). Four young out of Havre de Grace nest July 9 (Braun). See Cowbird.

YELLOW-THROAT - Five nests in swampy areas, earliest with 3 eggs and 1 Cowbird egg at Elliott Island, May 4, and the latest with 3 young at Patuxent Refuge on July 27 (Stewart).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - Four young in Greensboro nest, June 24 (Hewitt).

AMERICAN REDSTART - One nest at Woodstock on May 17 (E. K. Lubbert) and two at Camp Greentop, June 16 (Robert L. Bowen).

ENGLISH SPARROW - On June 8, eggs were in nests in Duvall Jones' martin-house at Rosendale. Four eggs in Goldsboro Barn Swallow nest, June 1 (Hewitt).

EASTERN MEADOWLARK - Two eggs in a Denton nest were deserted after grass was cut, June 5 (R. B. Fletcher). Six eggs, June 7-14, at

Federalsburg (Robert Wright, Sr.).

RED-WING - Fifty-six nests. Sixteen were in narrow-leaved cat-tails and six others in low marsh grass. The others were in sea-myrtle, sweet-pepper, alder, and swamp rosebushes from 10 inches to 6 feet up. Only one nest held 4 eggs; the rest held 2 or 3. The nesting season was late, with most eggs in first-brood nests the first week of June, and with few young out at that time. Probably A. J. Fletcher's 21 nests from Denton, most with eggs June 22 and 27, and the last young in on July 17, represent second-brood nests.

ORCHARD ORIOLE - Seven nests, 7 to 20 feet up in suburban trees. Young out of nest at Middle River, June 10; young were raised from 4 eggs at Owings Mills (July 7, Jean Worthley). Young left one Greensboro nest on June 18; another nest with eggs was blown down by a wind storm on July 5 (Bilbrough).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE - Eight nests, 15 to 60 feet up in suburban trees. Young were fed in the nest, June 5 to 15, while young were out of a Denton nest, June 11. The female had started building the latter nest on May 2 (R. B. Fletcher).

PURPLE GRACKLE - Building at Federalsburg, May 29 (Hewitt). At Middle River, June 7 to 9, the young in family groups were all well grown (Willis).

COWBIRD - Twelve nests were parasitized; Chipping Sparrow (4); Field Sparrow (2); Wood Thrush (2); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Naomi Hewitt); Kentucky Warbler (2 eggs in Owings Mills nest); Yellow-throat; and Song Sparrow (2 eggs on April 22 at Denton-- M. Butenschoen). Most records were for eggs up to June 23; on August 11 at Denton a Chipping Sparrow fed one young (R. B. Fletcher).

SCARLET TANAGER - Female building 40 feet up in Havre de Grace oak tree, May 16 (Lois Braun).

SUMMER TANAGER - On June 30 at Denton 2 young left 1 unhatched egg in a nest; another nest at Goldsboro held 3 young, July 13 to 27, which left as a cat climbed the tree (Fletchers, Russell Ely).

CARDINAL - The 24 nests were from 3 to 30 feet up (median, 6 feet), usually with 3 eggs or young. Three young banded in a Baltimore nest on May 2 (Hervey Brackbill) were quite early, as most first-brood nests were being built about that time. The last young were in a Denton nest on July 30 (R. B. Fletcher), suggesting three broods.

BLUE GROSBEAK - Doug Hackman reported 4 young which left a peach tree nest on July 24 near the northern limit of this species' range at White Marsh. Mrs. Gail Tappan saw 3 young being fed out of the nest at Gibson Island on August 15.

INDIGO BUNTING - Three young left an unusually high nest, 14 feet up in a dogwood at Havre de Grace, July 13-14 (Braun).

RED-EYED TOWHEE - Six nests on the ground, three with 2 eggs (earliest laid April 25-27 at Denton - R. B. Fletcher) and the others with 4 eggs or young, in May and June.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - 4 eggs in each of two unsuccessful nests at Owings Mills on June 26 (Elmer Worthley) and Millers, Carroll Co., on July 16 (Martha Dubois). Four young were out of their nest at Denton, July 10 (R.B. Fletcher).

SEASIDE SPARROW - One egg in an Elliott Island nest in a Spartina patens marsh, May 20 (Stewart).

VESPER SPARROW - Carrying food at Denton, July 18 (R.B. Fletcher).

CHIPPING SPARROW - Twenty-eight nests, over half in conifers. From 1 to 30 feet up (median 5 ft.), they held sets of 3 or 4 eggs. At Denton, building on April 26, 4 eggs in another nest on May 2, young out of another nest by June 3, and young out of an extremely late nest soon after Sept. 1 (Fletchers). Eggs from first-brood nests were in nests in May, generally; second-brood eggs were in nests after mid-June; third-brood nests had eggs in late July and early August.

FIELD SPARROW - Twelve nests, all near the ground in bushy fields except for one 10 feet up in a White Marsh cedar. Four young were banded in a Laurel nest, May 24 (Robbins). First-brood nests may include this and other records up to young out of the nest on July 6 at Denton (R.B. Fletcher), while second-brood nests probably include July records of eggs.

SONG SPARROW - Sixteen nests, with 3 to 6 eggs each. Four were of the first brood, nine of the second brood, and three of the third brood. With the exception of one first-brood nest 5½ feet up, the early nests were on the ground while later nests were increasingly higher. Six young out of an Edgewood nest on May 19 (O.I. Gaines) and other young leaving in early June marked the first brood. At Owings Mills, a probable second-brood nest was being constructed on May 21 (Jean Worthley); young left second-brood nests from late June to mid-July. Third-brood nests held eggs as late as August 12 at Denton (R.B. Fletcher).

1631 Gail Road, Baltimore

AMERICAN EGRETS NESTING IN CHESAPEAKE BAY

David E. Davis

A group of American Egrets (Casmerodias albus) has been found nesting on Bodkin Island in Eastern Bay on the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay among a colony of Great Blue Herons (Ardea herodias). The number of egret nests is not known for certain because of the difficulty of distinguishing them from those of the herons. On June 2, 1954 four adult American Egrets were seen and on July 2 one young was clearly seen in a nest.

It is certain that egrets did not nest on this island in 1953 because none was seen on frequent visits (about two per week). Furthermore, it is unlikely that the birds nested there from 1946 to 1952 because no egrets were seen nearby during regular visits to the general area. This is the first nesting record of this species in Queen Annes County, and represents a northward extension of range in Chesapeake Bay. All other Maryland rookeries of this species are in the southern counties.

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JANUARY THROUGH JUNE 1954

Chandler S. Robbins

The most important weather factor of the period, ecologically, was the progressive lowering of the water table. From January through May there was sufficient precipitation for normal development of vegetation, but no excess to replenish the accumulated deficiency in the subsoil. In both February and June precipitation for the State as a whole was the second lowest on record; and for the other four months it was near or below normal--this in spite of January's snowfall being the greatest for any month since February 1947. Snowfall in February and March was only 12 to 15 percent of normal.

Temperature-wise, the warm trend continued, climaxed in February and April with the third and second highest averages ever recorded. We experienced the coldest January since 1948; but ironically, even this month was warmer than the long-term average. May, of all months, was cold, wet and miserable, much to the disgust of the field observer, and there were few well-defined migration waves.

The recent trend toward mild 'southern' winters, plus the continual increase in field activity of our members, continue to break Christmas Count records and to extend the ranges of many wintering species. The first comprehensive spring migration records from the eastern edge of Chesapeake Bay (Talbot County) give hint of a concentration of transients there, such as appears to exist at Gibson Island on the western edge.

Grebes, Gannets, Herons. Three days before the beginning of this period Talbot County observers established a unique record. In one day they counted 1,737 Horned Grebes. The Pied-billed Grebe, while more widespread in Maryland, is never seen here in such large concentrations. A count of 82 obtained at Port Tobacco on Mar. 7 by Allen Stickley is decidedly high for this species. On Apr. 3 Renwick Kerr, John Taylor and John Terborgh counted 35 Gannets at Point Lookout; the Gannet occurs frequently in the lower Chesapeake, so this count is not expected to stand very many years as the highest spring tally on record from that area. The Green Heron was again in the spotlight this winter, 2 being recorded on the Chase Christmas count by Bill McHoul, one on the Ocean City Count by Charles Clagett and Ernest Baldwin, and one at Gibson Island on Jan. 24 by Mesdames Tappan, Henderson and Symington. This heron is a scarce winter resident even on the Gulf Coast, so we cannot expect it to become a permanent member of our winter avifauna. A Green Heron seen at Gibson Island on Mar. 24 may have been the same individual that was found there in January, as we have few spring arrival dates before the first week in April. The earliest true arrival this year was seen on Apr. 3 in Talbot County by Richard Kleen. Early American Egret arrivals included single individuals at Berlin, near the coast, Mar. 21 by John Taylor (possibly a wintering individual), at Bird River near the head of the Bay, Apr. 9 by Douglas Hackman, and at Loch Raven in the Piedmont, Apr. 17 by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Lubbert and Charles Buchanan.

Swans, Brant and Ducks. The principal northward flight of Whistling Swans began on the evening of Mar. 18 (Donald McComas, Douglas Hackman), and continued through the 28th of the month. Brant put on a big show in the coastal bays--not so much by their total abundance, but because they were widely scattered in small flocks and allowed close approach. Mr. H. W. Heine of Berlin still has the monopoly on European Teal; the only ones positively identified in Maryland have been seen on his private pond. On Feb. 21 when a large group of observers was peering through telescopes at the distant flock of Green-winged Teal with which the rare European Teal associates, Richard Cole announced that there were 2 drake European Teal in the flock. This was the first time that more than one individual had been suspected. (Females cannot be distinguished from female Green-wings.) The only European Widgeon identified was seen at Gibson Island on the Jan. 3 Christmas count. Among several late departure records, 2 Baldpates and a Scaup (probably Lesser) at Emmitsburg on May 31 (John W. Richards), and 2 Whistling Swans at Neavitt through June 6 (Richard L. Kleen) deserve mention.

Hawks. The first hawk flight of the season was noted at White Marsh on Feb. 25, on which day Doug Hackman identified a Cooper's Hawk, a Red-tail, 8 Red-shoulders, 3 unidentified hawks and a Bald Eagle (possibly a local bird rather than a migrant) in 1-1/2 hours. The Pigeon Hawk migration extended from Mar. 20 at Kent Island (Taylor) to May 21 at Sandy Point (Paul G. DuMont); as is usual in spring, only single birds were seen. The northward movement of Broad-wings extended from Apr. 3 at Allens Fresh in Charles County (Kerr, Taylor, Terborgh) to May 30 at Laurel (Chandler Robbins); the highest count was 36 at Emmitsburg, Apr. 19 (Dr. Richards).

Rails and Gallinules. The Clapper Rail has occasionally been recorded as far up the Chesapeake as Gibson Island, but never before in winter. On Jan. 3 one was watched out in the open in the marsh near the south tip of the island by Charles Buchanan, Mrs. Gail Tappan and Mrs. Mortimer North; what may have been the same individual was heard at the same location on Feb. 7. The Black Rail, which prior to this year had been seen by very few Maryland observers, was glimpsed by many people in the Elliott Island marshes where Robert Stewart and Clark Webster discovered it in 1953. Two Florida Gallinule reports were of local interest. The first bird flew into a boat on the Severn River on the early date of Apr. 7 (Norman B. Wells), and the second was captured in Emmitsburg and identified by Richards.

Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns. Several notable concentrations of Wilson's Snipe were reported, including 120 at Allens Fresh, Mar. 20 (Terborgh and others); 53 at Port Tobacco, Feb. 22 (Taylor); 50 at Denton, Feb. 24 (A. J. Fletcher); and 20 at Sandy Point on the late date of May 21 (Paul DuMont and others). Lois McCollough and Eleanor Minke saw a Spotted Sandpiper at Old Town, Allegany County on Apr. 10, an early date for western Maryland. The only other locality to report this species so early was Emmitsburg. A Pectoral Sandpiper in Charles County on Mar. 20 is the earliest spring record for Maryland (Kerr and party). A Stilt Sandpiper discovered at Middle River on May 9 (Duvall Jones) and another at Ocean City on May 15 (David Cutler, Kenneth Wright) are the first spring records for the State. The Great Black-backed Gull has seldom been seen along the lower Potomac River, except in the immediate vicinity of Chesapeake Bay. On Mar. 6 John Taylor spied an individual of this species at Cobb Island, Charles County. It will be interesting to see how far up the Potomac this bird will spread. It now occurs regularly all around the shores of the Chesapeake. Single Forster's Terns seen on Apr. 3 at Point Lookout and on the Wicomico River by Kerr, Taylor, and Terborgh represent the earliest ever recorded for Maryland. Edwin Willis found Least Terns common

again at Strawberry Point, Baltimore County, June 9, suggesting that they are once again nesting at their recently-deserted northernmost outpost in the Chesapeake.

Land Birds (General). In Table 1 are presented for comparative purposes the earliest spring arrival dates of representative species in 10 Maryland counties. Although many people have contributed dates for this table, the bulk of the records were supplied by the following: Allegany County, Lois McCollough and Eleanor Minke; Frederick County, Dr. John W. Richards; Montgomery County, John H. Fales, Seth H. Low, and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Matteossian; Baltimore County and City, Charles M. Buchanan, Stephen W. Simon, and Mrs. Alice Kaestner; Prince Georges, Robert E. Stewart, Chandler S. Robbins, Leonard Llewellyn, and John H. Fales; Anne Arundel, Mrs. W. L. Henderson and Mrs. Gail Tappan; Charles, Allen R. Stickley, Jr., M. Catherine Crone, John Terborgh, Renwick Kerr and John W. Taylor (also included under 'S.Md' are a few dates from adjacent Calvert and St. Marys Cos.); Caroline, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Marvin Hewitt, A. May Thompson, Margarete Butenschoen, and Alicia Knotts; Talbot, Richard L. Kleen; and Worcester, J. Kenneth Wright, John H. Buckalew, Lewis Oring, Paul DuMont, and Jack Hailman. The Worcester County observations are very incomplete, being based on only six days' records; nevertheless, they are believed to be of sufficient importance to warrant inclusion in the table. As in previous migration tables, "0" mean that no record of the species was obtained during this spring migration season, and a dash signifies that no significant arrival date was reported.

Cuckoos, Owls. The cuckoo migration flopped. Only a few localities reported Black-bills, whereas normally we can expect at least 2 or 3 of this species to turn up nearly everywhere. On Apr. 9 Col. and Mrs. U. Amoss observed a Yellow-billed Cuckoo closely at Gibson Island; this is by far the earliest record for the State. Another was found near Spring Gap, Allegany County, on Apr. 20 by Mrs. Gilbert Miller, Lois McCollough and others. Most observers reported that arrivals were late and that numbers remained low until the end of May. The only Snowy Owls appeared at Gibson Island, Jan. 18 (Mrs. S. Henderson), and Cambridge, Feb. 20 (Paul DuMont and others). Short-eared Owls, on the other hand, seemed less scarce than usual, and remained quite late; the last ones reported were seen in Charles County, Apr. 3 (Kerr, Taylor, Terborgh), and in St. Marys County, Apr. 12 (Stewart). Talbot County is about to become known as the Saw-whet Owl capital of Maryland, although as recently as six years ago there was only one record of this species for the entire Eastern Shore of this State. During the present period 4 Saw-whets were killed by cars, all in Talbot County: Jan. 1 at Oxford, Jan. 9 at Newcomb, Feb. 28 at St. Michaels, and Mar. 7 at Kirkham (Kleen). What does Talbot have that the rest of us don't? More night drivers? More fast drivers? More ornithological scavengers? Or just more Saw-whet Owls?

Hummingbirds, Flycatchers. Although many of us found Ruby-throated Hummingbirds late in arriving, the earliest spring date for the State was broken by one day by Miss A. May Thompson who saw one at Denton on Apr. 11. On May 20 Douglas Hackman saw a group of five hummingbirds flying high overhead. This species normally migrates singly through our area. Has anyone else seen it flying over in small flocks? Wood Pewees, noted for being among the latest spring migrants, arrived in several localities at the usual time (see Table 1); but the bulk of the population was weeks late. At my home near Laurel, for instance, where two or three pairs nest each summer, the first bird was not heard until May 19. The four scarce "Mississippi Flyway" species, the Least, Alder, Yellow-bellied, and Olive-sided, were scarcely reported at all as transients. The only Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was found on May 29 by Richard Kleen in the Pocomoke swamp, 100 miles east of its normal spring migration path.

Table 1. Spring arrival dates, 1954

	Allg	Fred	Mont	Balt	Pr G	Anne	S.Md	Caro	Talb	Worc
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4/20	5/3	5/1	5/1	5/9	4/9	5/30	5/2	5/16	5/16
Whip-poor-will	4/13	4/14	--	--	4/14	4/20	--	4/12	4/12	--
Nighthawk	5/8	5/16	5/16	5/4	5/24	--	--	5/1	5/7	--
Chimney Swift	--	4/7	4/8	4/17	4/13	4/15	5/2	4/14	4/4	4/21
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	--	5/16	4/25	4/24	--	4/27	--	4/11	4/27	--
Eastern Kingbird	--	4/23	5/1	4/29	4/20	4/25	5/2	4/20	4/27	--
Crested Flycatcher	5/8	4/23	4/25	4/29	4/27	4/28	5/2	4/26	4/24	--
Eastern Phoebe	--	3/18	2/28	3/8	3/3	3/26	3/21	3/14	3/24	--
Eastern Wood Pewee	--	5/3	5/2	4/30	5/8	5/8	5/2	5/3	5/3	5/9
Tree Swallow	0	4/17	5/12	4/3	3/25	--	3/20	3/26	3/20	--
Rough-winged Swallow	4/10	4/16	--	4/3	4/7	4/9	4/3	4/4	--	--
Barn Swallow	4/18	3/27	--	4/3	3/31	3/26	4/3	3/25	4/4	--
Purple Martin	--	4/8	3/21	4/3	3/25	3/31	4/3	3/14	3/23	--
House Wren	--	4/19	4/7	4/15	4/4	4/19	--	4/9	4/24	4/21
Catbird	4/20	4/23	4/30	4/23	4/15	3/28	5/2	4/27	4/19	--
Brown Thrasher	4/7	4/9	3/29	4/7	4/4	4/1	4/11	4/6	4/15	--
Wood Thrush	5/1	4/22	4/22	4/19	4/21	4/21	5/2	4/18	4/25	4/21
Olive-backed Thrush	--	5/1	--	5/2	5/18	4/20	5/8	--	4/28	--
Veery	--	5/9	5/1	4/30	5/3	--	5/8	5/6	5/8	5/9
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/10	4/6	4/6	4/10	4/7	4/7	4/3	3/29	--	--
American Pipit	0	3/20	4/4	--	3/18	--	3/20	3/31	--	--
Migrant Shrike	0	3/25	4/4	4/5	--	--	3/2	3/9	--	--
White-eyed Vireo	0	4/28	5/1	4/24	4/21	4/18	--	4/12	4/22	4/21
Yellow-throated Vireo	5/8	5/4	--	4/29	4/27	--	5/2	4/22	0	4/21
Blue-headed Vireo	--	4/20	--	4/29	4/14	4/29	--	--	4/24	0
Red-eyed Vireo	5/1	4/27	5/1	4/19	4/17	5/2	4/17	4/23	5/3	4/21
Black & White Warbler	4/17	4/18	4/25	4/17	4/8	4/27	4/3	4/4	4/24	4/21
Worm-eating Warbler	4/26	4/28	5/1	5/1	4/28	--	5/6	0	0	4/21
Blue-winged Warbler	5/8	5/1	5/1	4/26	4/28	5/2	0	4/28	4/23	4/21
Parula Warbler	4/26	4/25	4/18	4/21	4/14	4/29	4/14	4/22	4/25	4/21
Yellow Warbler	4/18	4/28	--	4/20	4/10	4/22	4/14	4/26	4/18	--
Magnolia Warbler	5/1	5/3	5/9	5/2	5/9	4/28	0	5/12	5/1	0
Cape May Warbler	5/1	4/28	4/27	5/8	4/27	5/8	0	0	5/3	0
Black-thr. Blue Warb.	5/1	4/27	5/1	4/24	5/9	4/29	5/2	5/3	4/28	4/26
Black-thr. Green Warb.	5/1	4/23	--	5/1	4/22	4/29	5/6	--	4/24	--
Blackburnian Warbler	5/1	4/27	--	4/28	4/25	5/8	5/2	--	5/12	0
Yellow-throated Warb.	0	0	0	0	4/23	4/9	4/3	4/23	5/8	4/21
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/8	4/27	5/1	4/29	5/2	4/27	5/2	5/1	5/8	4/26
Black-poll Warbler	5/8	5/15	5/2	5/2	5/2	4/23	5/2	4/27	5/12	5/2
Prairie Warbler	4/20	4/28	4/25	4/18	4/19	4/20	--	4/23	4/22	4/21
Ovenbird	5/1	4/24	4/25	4/20	4/10	4/28	5/2	4/13	4/14	4/21
Northern Water-thrush	5/8	4/27	5/1	4/23	4/23	4/28	--	--	0	5/2
Louisiana Water-thrush	--	4/6	4/8	4/10	4/7	3/29	4/11	4/3	0	--
Kentucky Warbler	0	5/2	5/1	5/2	4/27	--	5/8	4/24	5/8	5/2
Yellow-throat	4/10	4/24	--	4/17	4/18	4/17	--	4/10	4/15	4/21
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/1	4/29	5/1	5/1	4/28	4/29	5/2	5/1	4/30	5/2
Hooded Warbler	5/1	4/28	4/25	5/1	4/23	4/27	5/2	5/8	5/12	4/21
American Redstart	5/1	4/27	4/19	4/19	4/10	4/28	4/17	4/20	4/27	4/21
Bobolink	--	5/6	5/1	5/4	4/29	4/28	5/2	5/2	5/8	--
Orchard Oriole	5/8	5/8	5/1	5/8	5/1	--	5/2	4/20	4/25	--
Baltimore Oriole	5/1	4/28	--	4/26	5/1	5/2	5/2	4/21	4/27	--
Scarlet Tanager	5/1	4/28	4/26	4/26	4/20	4/28	5/1	4/20	5/8	--
Indigo Bunting	5/1	5/3	5/1	4/24	4/28	4/21	5/2	--	5/6	--
Savannah Sparrow	--	4/6	2/28	3/27	3/30	2/28	4/3	--	--	--
Grasshopper Sparrow	5/1	4/15	5/1	4/14	4/18	--	5/2	4/20	4/22	5/3
Vesper Sparrow	--	4/4	3/28	4/12	--	--	4/3	3/27	3/19	--
Chipping Sparrow	--	4/7	3/29	3/7	3/27	4/6	4/3	3/20	3/28	--

Swallows, Wrens, Thrushes. Large aggregations of Tree Swallows are commonplace in fall on the Eastern Shore, but seldom reported in spring. One of the best concentration spots in spring is Allens Fresh at the head of the Wicomico River in Charles County; at this location Kerr and party estimated 2,000 present on Apr. 3. The Short-billed Marsh Wren is rarely seen in Allegany County, but one was located on Apr. 26 at Spring Gap by Miss McCollough and Miss Minke. On Jan. 1 Mrs. Gail Tappan at Gibson Island saw and identified an Olive-backed Thrush, which she reported to Mrs. W. L. Henderson. On the following day, Mrs. Dolf Swing, who had not known of Mrs. Tappan's observation, saw and identified the same bird at the same place and also reported it to Mrs. Henderson. Although there are only a handful of authentic winter records of the Olive-backed Thrush anywhere in the United States, the circumstances surrounding this observation are most convincing. On Jan. 18, the last day the thrush was seen, Mrs. Tappan and Mrs. Henderson saw it together.

Gnatcatchers. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher winters regularly from coastal North Carolina southward, and for several years we have been half expecting to find one on an Ocean City Christmas Count. In the preceding SEASON report two December observations were published; one of these birds was seen subsequently on Jan. 1 and Jan. 5 at Denton by Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, the first January observation for the State. A fine count for this species was obtained in the Pocomoke swamp on Apr. 21 when Paul DuMont and party tallied 72 individuals.

Warblers. Two Pine Warblers were seen off and on in Greenbelt throughout the winter by Lewis Oring, and 2 others wintered at the Howard McCullochs' feeding station near Easton. These are the northernmost Maryland records of continuous presence through the entire winter. Early arrival dates for the Prothonotary Warbler at the northern edge of its range were Apr. 18 at Lake Roland (Buchanan) and Apr. 24 at Chase (William McHoul). Cape May Warblers broke the arrival record by one day by turning up on Apr. 27 at Laurel and Patuxent Refuge (Robbins) and at Silver Spring (Fales). Paul DuMont's Blue-winged Warbler in the Pocomoke swamp on Apr. 21 and Marvin Hewitt's Yellow-throat at Federalsburg on Apr. 10 both broke the earliest Maryland record. Some of the most interesting warbler records came from the vicinity of Spring Gap in Allegany County, where early arrivals were found by Lois McCollough and Eleanor Minke as follows: 2 Yellow-throats on Apr. 10 (tying Marvin Hewitt's record above); a Cerulean Warbler on Apr. 20 (breaking the State record by 5 days); 4 Worm-eating Warblers on Apr. 26 (beaten this year only by Worcester County); and 2 Golden-winged Warblers on Apr. 26 (beaten this year only by Baltimore County). Note that the Allegany arrival dates for the Cape May, Magnolia, and Prairie Warblers and the Yellow-breasted Chat were close to the average dates reported in the eastern and southern parts of the State.

Bobolinks, Tanagers, Grosbeaks. There was a spectacular flight of Bobolinks through the Piedmont and western-shore Coastal Plain on May 8, with peak counts of 990 in Howard County (Robbins and Mark Stephens), 600 at Loch Raven (Andrew Simon), 430 in Anne Arundel County (Philip and Paul DuMont), and tallies of more than 100 in Charles and Montgomery Counties. Scarlet Tanagers staged early arrivals in several areas. Single birds which were seen on Apr. 20 at Patuxent Refuge (Clark Webster), Greenbelt (Lewis Oring), and Denton (Margarete Butenschoen) tied the earliest previous State record. Another early bird of this species was seen in Baltimore on Apr. 26 by Nancy Davenport. The only Evening Grosbeak of the winter was a late male at Bethesda on May 12 (Mr. and Mrs. Matteossian).

Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel